

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Gene Callahan

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Illinois Statecraft* Oral History project

Interview # IS-A-L-2011-030

Gene Callahan, journalist, political advisor to Paul Simon and Alan Dixon, and chief lobbyist for Major League Baseball from 1993-1998, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: July 6, 14, 20, and 26 & August 9, 2011    Location: Abraham Lincoln  
Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: Kay Smith, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL volunteer

Total Pages: 215 pgs    Total Time: 2:03 + 2:15 + 2:05 + 1:29 + 1: 51 / 2.05 + 2.25 +  
2.08 + 1.48 + 1.85 = 9.71 hrs

Session 1: Early life through Callahan's journalistic career to 1967

Session 2: Callahan's years with Sam Shapiro, Paul Simon & Alan Dixon to 1980

Session 3: Callahan's years with Senator Dixon, 1980 - 1986

Session 4: Dixon's second term as U.S. Senator & his defeat in 1992

Session 5: Callahan's work as lobbyist for Major League Baseball on anti-trust issue

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on Nov 15, 2011

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in  
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## Abstract

### Gene Callahan, *Illinois Statecraft*, IS-A-L-2011-030

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Era Eugene (Gene) Callahan was born on November 5th, 1933 in Milford, Illinois, and grew up on his father's small hog farm outside Milford. His father was the Democratic County vice-chairman for Iroquois County, traditionally a Republican stronghold. Callahan attended Illinois College majoring in English, developed a passion for journalism, and graduated in 1955. Following two years in the army, Callahan returned to central Illinois and worked as a reporter, and later a columnist for the *Illinois State Register* (the Democratic leaning newspaper in Springfield, IL) until 1967. In 1968 he worked as an assistant press secretary for Governor Sam Shapiro, and from 1969-1972 he worked as press secretary for Lt. Governor Paul Simon, a Democrat serving with Republican governor Richard Ogilvie.

Following Simon's unsuccessful bid for governor in 1972, Callahan was hired by Alan Dixon in 1974. Dixon was IL State Treasurer at the time, then served as Secretary of State from 1977-1980, before being elected to the U.S. Senate in 1980. Callahan stayed with Dixon through all of these positions, becoming the Senator's Chief of Staff and most trusted advisor. When Dixon was defeated in a three-way Democratic primary in 1992 by Carol Mosley Braun, Callahan soon found work as the chief lobbyist for Major League Baseball, working to preserve baseball's antitrust exemption. His tenure there lasted until 1998, and included the strike from August, 1994 to April, 1995. Gene passed away on August 4, 2014.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** United States Senate from 1980 to 1993; Lt. Governor Paul Simon; Senator Alan Dixon; Senator Dick Durbin; anti-trust rule in baseball; baseball strike of 1994-95; Gov. Otto Kerner; Democratic Chairman James Ronan; Gov. Richard Ogilvie; Gov. Dan Walker; Gov. Jim Thompson; Clarence Thomas confirmation; Carol Moseley Braun; baseball commissioner Bud Selig; 1998 home run race & steroid abuse; sports team owner Jerry Reinsdorf

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